

## MINDLESSNESS OVER MATTER

in the campus parking lot  
i see a bumper sticker that i haven't seen before:  
"biology is not destiny."

my first thought is of all those species  
for whom biology probably and cruelly  
is or was destiny:  
the dodo-bird, for instance,  
and the snail-darter,  
and i wonder if man is all that different.

but i'm not ready to swallow socio-biology whole either,  
and it occurs to me, reflecting on something i read  
in time magazine, that perhaps we could arrive at  
a sort of consensus, compromise bumper sticker,  
something like, "biology is only sixty percent  
of destiny."

then i get to thinking about what bumper stickers  
really signify: the belief that loud, visible,  
and repeated statements can transform  
or create reality.

i'm teaching a course in short story/short film  
(actually i'm taking the course as i teach it)  
and i can see that the person who owns the car  
that sports the biology/destiny sticker  
stands firmly alongside munsterberg and arnheim  
and the other formative theorists  
in her opposition to kracauer and bazin  
and the realists.  
she feels that if enough people read her bumper sticker  
then, even if biology used to be destiny,  
it soon will cease to be.

and maybe she's right, i muse,  
and maybe i should take a lesson  
from her transformational project.  
maybe i should trade my car in on  
one with the largest bumper in the world  
and start plastering it with such hopeful pronouncements  
as:

anything ernest hemingway could do,  
gerald locklin can do better!

and, gerald locklin is a credit  
to the human race!

if i really want to test the power of words,



i should try, gerald locklin has made  
his mother very proud of him.

for starters, however,  
it's probably best i try something  
a trifle less arrogant,

something like,  
please buy gerald locklin's books.

#### DROWNING THE HATCHET

because i am so much more insecure  
than i can afford to let myself seem,  
i doubt that any of the women  
i have ever been with  
realize how important, on their best days,  
they have been to my survival.

they are more apt to be aware of how close  
they have come, on their worst days, to assisting  
me in my destruction,  
since i seem to have taken upon myself the mission  
of depicting in print woman at her worst.

but there have been innumerable times  
that i wanted to tell a woman how she had saved me,  
had wanted to publish it to all the world,

but i didn't, for the simple reason that  
the moment when it seemed the right thing to do  
passed,  
after which it seemed the wrong thing.

so here's a toast to all the women i've been with  
on their best days, my worst;  
may they be blessed for having saved,  
my life, my sanity, my sexuality,  
in ascending order of importance.

ah hell, i might as well toast those  
who nearly did me in as well,  
especially since they were so often  
the same person.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA